REVELATIONS WHICH NEED NOT BE ARGUED

Written Specially for The Bulletin.

Perhaps you've seen the story which has been going the rounds of the papers lately; that about the five farmers who got dinner at a Washington restaurant and paid $11 for it? If you haven't happened to notice it, here is the gist of it:

Five farmers, prosperous as farmers go, all from the middle west, and all representing farm organization, were in Washington on official business. They went to a popular restaurant and had a dinner consisting of beef, potatoes, corn, bread and butter and coffee with cream and sugar. One of the farmers is a cattleman, two are wheat growers; all raise potatoes and sweet corn to an extent sufficient to make them acquainted with market values. Also, two of them have an inside knowledge of the beet sugar proposition.

Having eaten and paid for their $11 dinner, it occurred to them to figure up how much of that $11 the farmers got who raised the beef, potatoes, wheat, corn, milk, cream and beet sugar.

What's your guess, reader? "Oh, about half."

You're wide; try again. "Well, a quarter, anyway."

That's a little better. I'll give you a third chance. "Good gracious," you say, "they must have got a tenth, at least."

No, dearly beloved, they didn't get a tenth. One-tenth of $11 would be $1.10. What the farmers got for the material which composed that $11 dinner was just 82 cents.

Later these five farmers had occasion to call on the president. They took these figures to him and showed them. Probably he was interested. I say "probably" for it is hard to see how any ordinarily intelligent human being could fail to be. Perhaps, sometime, we may get further evidence that he was. After he has arranged the internal affairs of Czecho-Slovakia and the hinterland of Trieste to his satisfaction. Of course, he must attend to those matters which he regards as of highest importance first.

Before one of the dozen or more investigating committees at the capitol recently appeared various Washington retailers, several of whom testified to making profits of from $5,000 to $7,000 a year with practically no capital invested beyond that necessary for the day's turnover. Next day L. D. Cassard, a Muirkirk, Md., farmer, testified that last year from a farm in which he has $25,000 invested his income was $3,500 more than his outgo. This computation allowed nothing for his own wages, for "overhead," or for the depreciation of buildings and machinery.

Without knowledge of how much work he did himself and how much he properly earned, nor of any facts on which to base a correct estimate of "overhead," there is nothing unfair or unusual in allowing 10 per cent. for depreciation in buildings, tools, teams, machinery, fences, and so forth. That leaves Mr. Cassard with an even thousand dollars to pay his own wages, take care of the "overhead," pay interest on $25,000—and figure out a profit!

If any expert figure-juggler in eastern Connecticut can do it, I suspect that Mr. Cassard would be willing to pay him something for the job.

Nor is this case of Mr. Cassard's unique or even uncommon. In truth, he was luckier last year than a great many other working farmers. I have one neighbor with twice $25,000 invested in his farm, who tells me that last year, after taking out wages paid hired labor, actual expenses in money paid out for supplies, repairs, renewals of tools, taxes and insurance, he has left less than $2,800 with which to support his family, pay his own wages and take care of "overhead" and depreciation. "How much clean profit did you make?" I asked him. "Profit?" he retorted. "I drew six hundred dollars from the bank to make up the deficit!"

I have another neighbor, a "small" farmer," with perhaps $5,000 invested in farm, buildings, tools, teams, stock, machinery, etc. He employs one man from April 1st to Jan. 1st at $2 a day. Also a little extra help in the hurry of haying and harvesting. He has to buy a hundred dollars' worth or so of manure or fertilizer every year. Beyond that, his farm is practically self-sustaining. Last year, though he worked steadily himself, often as much as fourteen, never less than eight hours a day, after paying wages and buying manure and seeds, he has left less than six hundred dollars to pay taxes, and insurance, and repairs, and depreciation, and interest, and his own wages, and take care of "overhead"—and make a profit! But for the fact that he raised all his own horse and cattle and hog and hen feed, his own wheat to make his own flour, his own vegetables, his own eggs and milk and butter, etc., so that he had to buy almost nothing for domestic needs, he wouldn't have made enough to pay taxes and insurance.

Now here are three farmers, two of whom I know personally and one who is testifying under oath, representing big farms and little farms, in widely separate parts of the country, each one of whom works as hard and longer hours than any trolleyman or railroad men or factory employe or miner, not one of whom earned a penny of wages for his work, after taking care of primary and first essential charges. They all "worked for nothing and boarded themselves."

Mr. Cassard I never heard of before. The other two I know to be hard-headed, hard-working, thrifty, forehanded farmers, careful in buying and ordinarily shrewd in selling.

And yet last year was popularly credited with being a "good year" for farmers!

And thousands of city people today actually believe that the greedy, grasping, extortionate potato and cabbage growers are getting "rich" off their—city people's—necessities!

Why, when I hear of a mob of strikers, striking for a reduction of hours already less than we farmers work and for an increase of wages already higher than we farmers get—when I hear of them howling against farmers as "profiteers," I want to go out back of the barn, kill a potato bug and send them some of its brains to eke out their tar scanty stock!

They "don't understand," we are told. Perhaps not, but what did God give them any brains at all for, unless to enable them to understand that which is plain as a pikestaff and incontrovertible as the multiplication table?

Washington is full of "investigating committees" who are actually tumbling over each other in their search for "data." So are many of the state capitals. Scores of unofficial organizations are taking a hand in similar sleuthing. It makes a plain man tired.

Once a judge, listening boredly to a proxy lawyer's setting forth of certain primary legal principles, broke in with: "Pass on to your argument, Brother Simpkins. You may take it for granted that the court knows a little something of law."

The whole country knows by this time that the reason for the high cost of living is largely in the tolls taken by the in-between handlers—those who stand along the road leading from consumer to producer and snatch off something from the load every time they can get their grabhooks into it. That's where most of the difference between the farmers' 82 cents and the restaurant keeper's $11 went.

The farmer sold to a traveling buyer who sold to a commission man—and made a profit. The jobber sold to the retailer—and made a profit. The retailer sold to the restaurant keeper—and made a profit. The restaurant keeper cooked it and served it in a decorated and be-mirrored dining room, with spotless napery and glistening tableware—and made a profit; a profit on the food, and a profit on the cook's and waiter's wages, and a profit on the rent, and a profit on the laundry bill, and a profit on his decorator's charges.

That there was more than honorable profit-taking, that there was rapacious "profiteering" somewhere along that tortuous and devious maze of handling is undeniable. That there was "profiteering" on the part of the farmers who got 82 cents for the real food contained in five husky men's dinners is incredible on the face of things.

What the country needs is less time- and money-wasting "investigations" and more common sense on the part of its government. It doesn't cost a second's time nor a cent of money to see a thunderstorm when it gets into action. It is perfectly palpable to the wayfaring man, even though he be half a fool.

But the politicians at Washington and the opportunists at the state capitals don't seem able to recognize a thunderhead when they see it or to know a manifest, apparent, conspicuous and notorious fact when it looms in their very pathway, as big as the Leviathan and as noisy as a Caproni airplane.

Oh, for an hour of "Teddy" Roosevelt—or some other man in power who can see a sixty-penny spike, and hit the nail on the head with a sledge or a "big stick" or anything which will do the business!

In the meantime, the much grumbling and ever-denunciatory consumer could help himself a lot if he wasn't quite so self-indulgent and helpless and—shall I say it?—lazy. The farmer, as a rule, is ready to meet him half way. If he won't go that half way—if it's too much trouble or if he'd rather play billiards or go to the ball game; or if his wife had rather sit upstairs and read novels than do her own marketing; or if they're both too high-toned to carry a hunk of beef or a bag of sugar home from the store, etc., etc., why, then they've got to pay somebody else for waiting on them.

It used to be only babies who held their own fingers in the fire and then boo-hooed because it burned.

THE FARMER.

FRANKLIN

Mrs. L. A. Robinson has returned after spending a few days in Yantic with Mrs. Lucy Manning.

Clifford Huntington Robinson spent a few days in Pawtucket, R. I., recently.

Mrs. Louise Brown of Eastern Point has been spending several days with Mrs. C. W. Grant.

Mrs. May Ross was a recent Norwich visitor.

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Grant recently entertained Mr. and Mrs. Sanford Meech and son, and Mrs. Louise Brown, of Eastern Point.

Miss Florence Brown of Somerville, is spending a few weeks with Mrs. Louis Smith and Mrs. Arthur Smith.

Mrs. Josephine Hart and Miss Elizabeth Hart have returned, after spending ten days with Mrs. Archie Lamb.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Grow of Somerville have returned to their home after spending a few weeks with Mr. and Mrs. Louis Smith.

Schools in town opened September 8, with the following teachers: Lebanon Road, Miss Blanche Smith; Sodom, Miss Lighton; Meeting House Hill, Miss Cunningham; Windham Road, Miss Mabel Durr; Pautipaug, Miss Catherine Holton, Miss Antia Holton, District No. 6.

Rev. Mr. Tate preached an excellent sermon Sunday morning at the Franklin church. Miss Florence Grow, of Somerville, sang a solo which was greatly enjoyed.

Mr. and Mrs. C. W. Grant, Miss Marion Beckwith and Mr. and Mrs. Everett Chappell, were recent visitors at Mohegan park, Norwich.

New Haven.—Prof. William Lyon Phelps is in San Antonio, Tex., where he will address a convention of public school teachers.

SALEM

Mr. and Mrs. Carl Rogers and family were callers in Norwich Town on Sunday.

The selectmen inspected the road about town Monday.

The Y. P. S. C. E. meeting Sunday evening was led by Mrs. Dwight Marvin.

Mr. and Mrs. G. J. Murray and son Ronald, Mr. and Mrs. N. L. Clark and J. Milton Clark were callers in South Glastonbury Sunday.

J. D. Fraser attended the fair show at Springfield the first of the week.

Never judge a man by the opinion his wife has of him.

Stories of Adventure and Love

A Masked Battery

By Annette Angert

"DAD" HANSLOW was at the shanty with the boys, who were there from force of habit on their off-day. "Dad" was there because his years had given him an honorable retirement, and he couldn't rest up right any other place than about the yards. The boys all liked "Dad" because he was a fine old man, and never bragged about how much more head-work it took to run an engine in his day than in theirs.

"The 'Joe' had only been built a few years," the veteran went on, "and the management had a sort of religious prejudice against settling claims for damages. Idea was to make it unpopular to litigate a railroad on account of the expense.

"Over by New Wales, on the Cloverdale division, there was the dickens of a hill, and the boys never tried very hard to stop for cattle or anything else once they got started down.

"We had a claim agent named Bill Stivers. A tall, rawboned Yankee he was. They said nobody ever got a dollar out of him without they took a drill and bored. For a farmer to sue for a cow killed by the steam cars Stivers thought was a greater indignity than to walk on the flag. He took all the litigation against the road as a personal insult. Funny way of looking at it, according to our notions out here; but the big guns of the road seemed to think Stivers was about right.

"Stivers divided all humanity into two classes—fellows who were of honest reputation because they hadn't been found out, and known swindlers.

"Naturally, when Colonel Barnhart, who had come from a Southern state up into this country, put in a bill for ten dollars for two hogs killed on the New Wales hill, Stivers went on the theory it was a hold-up, and proceeded accordingly. He made a trip over to the place of the disaster to the hogs, and met a tall, soldierly-looking man wearing a broad felt hat and grayish mustache. Stivers hated that kind of a man, because, as a loyal supporter of the government by proxy, he just couldn't abide one o' them darned rebels who fought to tear down the principles of our nation, is the way he put it.

"But Stivers was wise to his job. He smiled at his enemy, rubbed his hands sorrowfully for the pigs, and said the matter should receive his very earliest and most considerate attention, et cetera. He could use flowery language when he had to, that man Stivers, and the Colonel believed every word he was telling him.

"The claim drifted along six months or so, when the Colonel writted a very nice little note, apologizing in humble terms for the 'presumption,' but doubtless the matter of the sudden demise of those porkers had been overlooked, Mr. Stivers being a very busy man; but would he, at his leisure—when all weightier things were out of the way—please give such attention as the occasion warranted to the claim of Yours very cordially and sincerely, Colonel Barnhart.

"Stivers grinned in that death's-head way he had when he was satisfied with himself, seized his quill and a sheet of paper, and 'regretted very much to inform your honor that your claim for two hogs killed on New Wales hill, in the year of grace 1875 or thereabouts—in figures and spelled out—has been annulled by the statutes herein made and provided to the effect that such claims must be filed and prosecuted within six months!

"The next news was from the constable serving notice of suit in Squire Tumulty's court.

"'Let 'em sue,' says Mr. Stivers. 'He won't bluff me. The old noddle of a squire will find for him because they drink out of the same bottle, and then I'll appeal to the Circuit Court, where a persecuted railroad stands a show for justice. If they want law they can have it.'

"In due course the case came on for trial, and Stivers was notified that judgment by default had gone against the railroad; he would be allowed ten days to appeal by putting up a bond for two hundred dollars.

"It was getting close to the ten days when the Colonel strolled quietly 'round to Squire Tumulty's justice shop, squated down on a chair, and tilted himself comfortably against the wall.

"'Any news, squire?'

"'Nope—none, for sure. They filed that bond.'

"'Lemme see it,' says the Colonel.'

"The Squire fished it out of a pigeonhole and handed it over. Then the Colonel asked, kinder careless:

"'Know the men on this bond, Squire?'

"'Nope.'

"'Know whether they be worth two hundred dollars?'

"'By gum, I don't Do I have to know that?'

"'Turn to your statutes.'

"The Squire fumbled through the pages until he found Bonds and Appeals, and saw where it said he must be satisfied of the solvency of the fellows that signed bonds.

"'Gee!' cried the old man. 'What'll I do?'

"'You might send it back and ask them to guarantee the bond,' replied the Colonel, mildly; 'that's one way.'

"And that's the way the Squire did the next day. The day following he got a certified check for two hundred dollars and the endorsement of the home banker that he would cash it, or any amount that might be needed to make good the appeal.

"Squire Tumulty communicated with Colonel Barnhart, who hunted up an almanac.

"'Case tried and judgment went against defendant on the 3d of April?' he asked.

"'That's right, Colonel; I got it right down here on my book.'

"'Approved bond got here 15th?'

"'Yesterday. Yes, that was the 15th. By gum—they're out! What'll I do next?'

"'You might try an eecution!'

"In the early dawn of the net day, Terry McNamara was making the run of his life with his old hog to get No. 15 over the hill. He hadn't the slightest intention of stopping at New Wales, but a pile of ties across the track and a man standing on the track, waving a red flag, caused him to change his mind. When he had got all the brakes on and recognized the man with the flag as the agent, he started to make offensive remarks, but he stopped at finding a double barreled shotgun close to his head.

"'What the h—'

"'Hands up! Step down! The other man, too! Lively now! Faces to the wall! That's right. Don't move! Now, Sambo, you and Rastus put the chains through those big wheels.'

"Colonel Barahart and the two niggars that work for him on the farm had captured the train. The conductor came scooting down the platform, wanting to know. The Colonel p'inted his gun and made him join the dead line, face to the wall. Several of the passengers piled out on the platform and offered the Colonel money if he would spare their lives. Some of the women screamed, and the Colonel went back to pacify 'em.

"He didn't seem in a hurry. Another train came from the east, but the engineman saw something was up and stopped. The agent sent a man west to flag a train coming from that end.

"When all this news was wired into the general offices,—the president ordered the agent to hunt up the constable and have him arrest Colonel Barnhart for stopping the United States mail, threatening the lives of the crew, and blowing open the epress safe; to get in as many things as he could think of, so some of 'em would stick sure.

"The agent replied that the constable was down the river fishing, and that Squire Tumulty had appointed Colonel Barnhart to act; that the Colonel had in his inside coat pocket an execution for $126.17, and was serving it as by the statutes made and provided.

"The Squire offered to telegraph to headquarters the section under which he was proceeding, if the railroad would stand the tolls.

"The president called Stivers and showed him the muss they were in. While they talked the dispatcher reported No. 23 was blocked on the east end with twenty cars of stock, and the owners were roaring about missing the market.

"'Stivers,' said the president, 'what did you do to that man?'

"'Nothing. He had two hogs killed and forgot to bring suit in time.'

"'I see. You're too far from home. I'll manage this deal now.'

"So he wired in to the agent at New Wales to settle the Colonel's claim for both the hogs and the mule, and to ask the Colonel if he would please let the steam cars move along.

"'He says he won't let go till somebody apologizes to him,' replied the agent.

"'It's up to you, Stivers,' said the president, handing him the message.

"'No, it ain't,' says Stivers; 'I'm fired. I don't like the railroad business anyhow.'

"Then the president walks up and down the room to get the mad off, and runs this over to New Wales:

"'My dear Colonel, we're all sorry if we've hurt your feelings. Come over to the city some night and be my guest. Will give you the time of your life. Dixie forever!

"'JOSEPH SEXTON, President.'

"'Wish you boys a pleasant journey,' remarked the Colonel, in that genial way of his, as he grounded arms and motioned to Terry and the fireman and conductor to break ranks. 'Stop over some time when you're not in a hurry, and I'll drive you out to the farm and give you some buttermilk.'

"'What!' cried Terry, indignantly. "The Colonel slowly let the curtain fall over his beautiful blue eye—the left one—and Terry grinned.

"'Here's to you and your good health, Colonel,' he says, as he stood in the gangway and made like he was drinking something out of his cap; 'an' may ye raise so many hawgs an' ducks an' bandy-legged mules that the stame injuns can't get by at all!'"

"And Bill Stivers?" asked an engineman of the new generation.

"Oh, he bought a farm out on the Cloverdale division,' replied "Dad," "and went to raising thoroughbred live stock. He made some good sales now and then—mostly to the railroad."

Jealousy's Reward

By Enos Emory

WHEN Emily and Dick Stanley started housekeeping in what Dick called "a dinky young flat" they felt that in all the world there was no happier couple than themselves.

Dick made a comfortable living from the automobile business, but he knew that if they some day hoped to be independent they must economize and turn back into the business a goodly percentage of his earnings. Emily entered loyally into the spirit of things and gladly helped. Then her dearest friend married, and simultaneously with the setting up of her home in the little community the happiness of the Stanleys took flight.

Florence's home was much more elaborate than hers, but Emily's generous nature found no cause for envy—at first. She exclaimed with delight over the dainty loveliness of her friend's new possessions, and enjoyed it all until she saw Florence's own boudoir. Then her loyalty to her own simple little home died, and left her with a heart full of discontent.

The room was truly lovely. The furniture was of white enamel; the wall paper a satiny white with a deep border of softly tinted pink roses interwoven with an elusive suggestion of blue. What charmed Emily most was that the cretonne overhangings at the windows, the portieres and the soft, thickly upholstered cushions on the white wicker chairs exactly matched the border of the wall paper.

The effect was wonderfully pretty. And it looked so simple and inexpensive that almost at once Emily began mentally planning to do her own room in the same way. Her furniture was white, and the rest would be easy. Of course, she told herself, it would cost a little extra, and Dick wanted her to economize, but she felt so sure that the expense would prove trifling that she determined to have the room done over without consulting him, and depend upon the charming effect to justify her action in his eyes.

But the best laid plans of many a young housekeeper have been ruthlessly disarranged by a visit to the shops, and so it proved with Emily. The room could not be done for a penny less than $50. A wave of bitter disappointment swept over Emily as she heard the verdict. Dick would never consent to her spending the money and she dare not do it without consulting him. Fifty dollars meant a lot in these days of competition.

Emily's heart had been so set upon the plan that she found it impossible to see the matter in a sensible light. All day she schemed and figured. But always she was forced to return to the cold, hard fact that without Dick's cooperation she could accomplish nothing. And, such is human nature, that before night she had worked herself into a splendid case of indignation against the tyrant who held the purse-strings, and all unknowingly poor Dick walked into a veritable hornet's nest when he regretfully explained that while he wanted her to be happy, he simply could not spend the money.

"You know, dear," he said gently, "that we agreed to do without all these things until the business is well established. Then you shall have as much and more than Florence. But it's out of the question now."

"Out of the question now!" blazed Emily. "Everything that I have wanted has been out of the question since I married you! When it comes to buying a car, or fixing up your old garage you spend money enough, I notice!"

Dick's face went white with anger. For one single moment he stared in amazement at his wife, and then turned and left the room.

If he had argued with her; if he had even reproached her it is more than likely that Emily would have repented for her cruel speech and begged forgiveness then and there. But her own guilty conscience and unjust anger at Dick found expression in a stubborn sullenness which refused all overtures at reconciliation, and a dreary week passed with unhappiness and gloom in the little home where once love and unselfishness reigned. Dick seldom now spent any but absolutely necessary time at home. Every minute was devoted to his business, and Emily found herself hating it with all the bitterness of which unjust anger is capable.

"Emily, when are you going to forget this idea and be yourself again?" Dick asked one evening after a particularly silent and gloomy dinner.

"When I can have the things I need, perhaps I will feel more like myself," she snapped.

Dick looked at her with eyes full of silent reproach. "Sometimes I wonder, dear, if you love me at all," he said wistfully.

"Sometimes I wonder if I do!" she repeated defiantly.

An hour later the unkind words were brought back to her with awful vividness. There had been a gasoline explosion at the garage, and she had been summoned to what might prove to be Dick's deathbed. Every hateful word; every disagreeable action of the past week flashed through Emily's mind as she knelt by the white hospital bed and implored the inanimate figure lying there to speak to her. But there was no response, nor did Dick regain consciousness during all that long night.

In the morning there was slight improvement. The doctors inzisted that Emily return to her home; her presence could do no good, they assured her and she must keep up her strength. It was a weary and sorrowful girl who stumbled into the little flat that morning. And as she looked about her simple little room, which in spite of its lack of imported cretonnes was wonderfully pretty and homelike, Emily wondered how she could have thought that anything but Dick's happiness mattered.

But regrets seemed as utterly futile now as did her frantic resolutions never to be unkind again if only Dick could get well.

So the day dragged by, and the night. And another day and night, and yet another. And then the doctors pronounced Dick out of danger.

Once again Emily knelt by the bedside, but now the blue eyes which were all of Dick's face left unbandaged, smiled a welcome. Emily's heart was too full for words as she slipped her arms about him and buried her face in his shoulder.

"Dear," he whispered softly, "when I come home we'll have that room done over. I've planned it all out.'

"That room will stay just as it is," she said almost savagely. "There's nothing the world that matters but having you—and helping you. And cretonne is not necessary to do either."

And in the little hospital room there was a deep silence as a smooth rosy cheek was pressed lovingly to a bandaged one.